



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/929,274	08/14/2001	Don A. Tran	ACUITY-028XX	8198

7590 10/05/2004
BOURQUE & ASSOCIATES, P.A.
Suite 303
835 Hanover Street
Manchester, NH 03104

EXAMINER

SIANGCHIN, KEVIN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

2623

DATE MAILED: 10/05/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/929,274

Applicant(s)

TRAN ET AL.

Examiner

Kevin Siangchin

Art Unit

2623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-43 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-43 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

Detailed Action

Election/Restriction

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

Invention I: Claims 1-10 and 30-35, drawn to a method and system, respectively, for monitoring the delivery of workpieces to a position, comprising the steps:

1. Storing a digital reference image of the position prior to the delivery.
2. Storing a digital operating image of the position during the delivery.
3. Performing image arithmetic on the reference image and the operating image to produce a digital evaluation image.
4. Establishing a threshold image condition for the evaluation image.
5. Examining the pixels in the evaluation image to determine whether the threshold image condition is met.

classified in class 382, subclass 152; and,

Claims 19-29 drawn to a method for controlling the delivery of packages from a package source to a plurality of lanes on a slide, comprising steps 1-5, above, also classified in class 382, subclass 152.

Invention II: Claims 11-18 and 36-43, drawn to a method and system, respectively, for controlling the flow of packages from a conveyor to a lane, wherein lanes are activated by monitoring the fill status of at least one active lane, classified in class 198, subclass 437.

2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because: Inventions I and II are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct from each other if they are shown to be separately usable. In the instant case, Invention II controls the flow of packages based on the fill status

Art Unit: 2623

of at least one lane, wherein the fill status is based on the a comparison of images. However, the Invention II does not rely on a particular type of comparison. Invention I, on the other hand, relates to monitoring and/or controlling the flow of packages based on an image comparison that proceeds, specifically, according to steps 1-5 above. In this manner, invention I and invention II have separate utility and are separately usable. See MPEP § 806.05(c) and MPEP § 806.05(d).

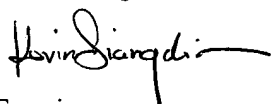
3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
4. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kevin Siangchin whose telephone number is (703)305-7569. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00am - 5:30pm, Monday - Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Amelia Au can be reached on (703)308-6604. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

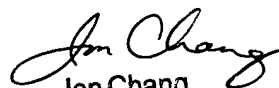
Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Kevin Siangchin



Examiner
Art Unit 2623

ks - 10/1/04 11:14 AM



Jon Chang
Primary Examiner